

<b>ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	19 October, 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Poverty and Cost of Living Challenges
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	At the Committee's request, to consider the: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poverty in context and cost of living challenges</li> <li>2. Benefits and financial support</li> <li>3. Free school meals scheme</li> <li>4. Preventative schemes</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Chair:</b>	Cllr Robert Llewelyn Jones
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Cllr Robin Williams, Finance, Corporate Business and Customer Experience Portfolio Holder Cllr Ieuan Williams, Education and Welsh Language Portfolio Holder Cllr Alun Mummery, Housing and Community Safety Portfolio Holder
<b>Head of Service:</b>	Marc Jones, Director of Function (Resources) / S151 Officer Marc Berw Hughes, Director of Education, Skills and Young People Ned Michael, Head of Housing Services
<b>Report Author:</b> <b>Tel:</b> <b>Email:</b>	Dylan Williams, Chief Executive 01248 752499 <a href="mailto:DylanWilliams@ynysmon.llyw.cymru">DylanWilliams@ynysmon.llyw.cymru</a>
<b>Local Members:</b>	Relevant to all Elected Members

### 1 - Recommendation/s

The Committee is requested to:

**A1** Note the schemes and intervention in place to support individuals and communities across Anglesey through the cost of living crisis

**A2** Comment on the resilience and adequacy of the schemes and interventions in place to support the people of Anglesey.

### 2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

Direct link to the Council's existing Plan:

- Objective 1: Ensure that the people of Anglesey can thrive and realise their long-term potential
- Objective 2: Support vulnerable adults and families to keep them safe, healthy and as independent as possible.

### 3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

#### To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-

**3.1** Impact the matter has on individuals and communities [**focus on customer/citizen**]

**3.2** A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality [**focus on value**]

**3.3** A look at any risks [**focus on risk**]

**3.4** Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role [**focus on performance & quality**]

**3.5** Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[**focus on wellbeing**]

**3.6** The potential impacts the decision would have on:

- protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
- those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (when making strategic decisions)
- opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language [**focus on equality and the Welsh language**]

[**focus on equality and the Welsh language**]

### 4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

- i. To what extent are the national interventions to assist individuals with the cost of living challenges adequate to support the individuals and communities of Anglesey?
- ii. To what extent is the Council playing a full and effective role in supporting individuals and communities facing financial hardship?
- iii. In terms of forward planning, what gaps or areas require further consideration by the Authority?

### 5 – Background / Context

#### 1. Poverty in context and the cost of living challenges

**1.1** The cost of living has been increasing across the United Kingdom since the start of 2021. The annual rate of inflation reached 9.9% in August 2022, close to a 30 year high. This has had a real impact on the affordability of goods and

services for households with the cost of many essential goods increasing faster than household incomes.

**1.2** It is fair to say that the cost of living crisis in Britain (namely food, energy and fuel costs) continues to be a daily reality for all – including individuals, families, communities, businesses and other bodies on Anglesey.

## **2. Benefits and Financial Support available to individuals facing financial hardship**

**2.1** The Council has a duty to support individuals facing financial hardship in a number of ways e.g. housing benefits, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and free school meals to name a few.

**2.2** In March, 2020, as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic, a number of additional interventions were introduced nationally to support those facing hardship as a result of the Pandemic. These were administered by the Local Authority e.g. weekly payments for pupils eligible for free school meals.

**2.3** More recently, the Government introduced further interventions to assist eligible individuals with the cost of living crisis. These are a series of one off payments to support individuals on top of the usual support available.

**Appendix 1** sets out the details of these interventions along with the local administrative arrangements for processing and arranging timely payments to eligible individuals.

## **3. Free School Meals Scheme**

**3.1** The free school meals scheme is a national intervention by Welsh Government in an attempt to reduce food poverty amongst primary aged schoolchildren. It will ensure that all primary aged schoolchildren have access to free school meals by September, 2023. The plans for delivering the scheme on Anglesey are detailed in **Appendix 2**.

**3.2** The Summer Holiday Improvement Programme has been running for 3 years and provides education on food and nutrition, physical activities, enrichment sessions and healthy meals for children in socially deprived areas (details in **Appendix 2**).

## **4. Preventative Schemes**

**4.1** While the cost of living crisis is affecting everyone in Wales, low income households are the hardest hit. The Council continues to provide a number of services and interventions locally in addition to the interventions provided by the UK Government and Welsh Government – many in partnership with other local bodies.

**4.2 Appendix 3** details how the Council provides its local services and interventions (often in partnership with other bodies) to reduce the effects of poverty on Anglesey, under the following headings:

- **Food**
- **Child poverty**
- **Fuel poverty**
- **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)**
- **Debt**
- **Period and Hygiene**
- **In-work poverty.**

## **6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]**

### **6.1 Potential impacts on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010**

### **6.2 Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decisions)**

### **6.3 Potential impacts on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language**

## **7 – Financial Implications**

## **8 – Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** Benefits and Financial Support available to individuals facing financial hardship

**Appendix 2:** Free School Meals Scheme

**Appendix 3:** Preventative Schemes

## **9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):**

<b>Title</b>	BENEFITS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS FACING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP
<b>Author</b>	Marc Jones, Director of Function (Resources) / S151 Officer
<b>Date</b>	October 2022

## 1. Background Information

The Council has a responsibility to help with people who are experiencing financial hardship in a number of ways:-

- Assessing and paying housing benefit claims;
- Assessing applications under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme;
- Assessing applications and awarding financial assistance through the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) scheme;
- Awarding of free school meals to eligible pupils;
- Awarding of school uniform grants;
- Helping residents manage their debts through the Housing Financial Inclusion Team and the J.E.O'Toole Centre.

In March 2020, as a result of the pandemic, the Council operated a number of schemes on behalf of Welsh Government to help residents who were experiencing financial hardship as a result of Covid. These included;-

- Paying a set sum each week to pupils who normally received a free school meal. The payments were made for the periods when schools were forced to close due to the Covid regulations and through the school holidays.
- Making payments to residents who were forced to self isolate due to Covid and who were unable to undertake their normal job.

As the Covid pandemic eased, the cost of living crisis started and the Council continued to administer Welsh Government schemes, designed to provide financial support to those most in need. These additional funding schemes are as follows:-

- Continued payments to those pupils who are eligible to receive free school meals, during holiday periods. The number of applications for free school meals has risen from around 1,200 pre Covid to over 2,000 currently.
- A cost of living payment of £150 to eligible households during the summer of 2022. Approximately 23,000 properties were eligible under this scheme.
- Payment of Winter Fuel payments to eligible households in the winter of 2021/22 and again in Autumn 2022.
- Setting up and administering a discretionary cost of living scheme to help those still in financial need or those who may have not received a cost of living payment for technical reasons (exempt from paying Council Tax, did not occupy the property on the qualifying date).

These additional one off schemes are in addition to the help and support that is normally provided.

## **2. Administration of the Schemes**

Responsibility for rolling out these additional schemes has fallen in the main on a small group of staff in Housing Benefits, Council Tax and the Payments Teams and to a lesser extent on staff in Housing and the J.E.O'Toole Centre.

As part of the administrative arrangements, the Welsh Government provides a budget to meet the cost of administration. Given the temporary nature of the schemes and the urgency to roll them out, it has not been possible to appoint and train additional staff to undertake this additional work and the Council has used the funding to:-

- Sub-contract some of the assessment or payment processing work to external companies.
- Employed agency staff to provide additional resources in the Teams most affected. Although finding suitable agency staff has been challenging and the Council has not always been successful.

Each scheme requires the setting up of a separate system to deal with applications, generate payments and account for the expenditure. However a significant amount of work has resulted in having to deal with incomplete applications, identifying duplicate applications, dealing with applicants queries as to when they would receive their payments or why their application had been rejected. These enquiries have result in a significant increase in telephone calls and correspondence, over and above the work required to assess the application and make the payment.

It has only been through the hard work and goodwill of a small number of staff that the Council has succeeded to complete the task and to ensure that the financial help has gone to those who were most in need.

## **3. Conclusion**

Since the start of the cost of living crisis, the Council has distributed over 44,000 individual payments amounted to £4.7m. It is estimated that a further 18,700 payments amounting to over £2m will be distributed before the end of the financial year.

The need to administer these additional one off schemes has impacted on the Council's ability to deal with the normal day to day work and has resulted in backlogs of work, in particular within the Council Tax Section, where a significant amount of this additional work has been undertaken.

Once the need to provide this additional one off financial help ends, work will continue to provide support to those most in financial need through the Housing Benefit Team (Housing Benefits, CTRS applications, free school meals, pupil development grants) and through the work of the Financial Inclusion Team and the J.E.O'Toole Centre.

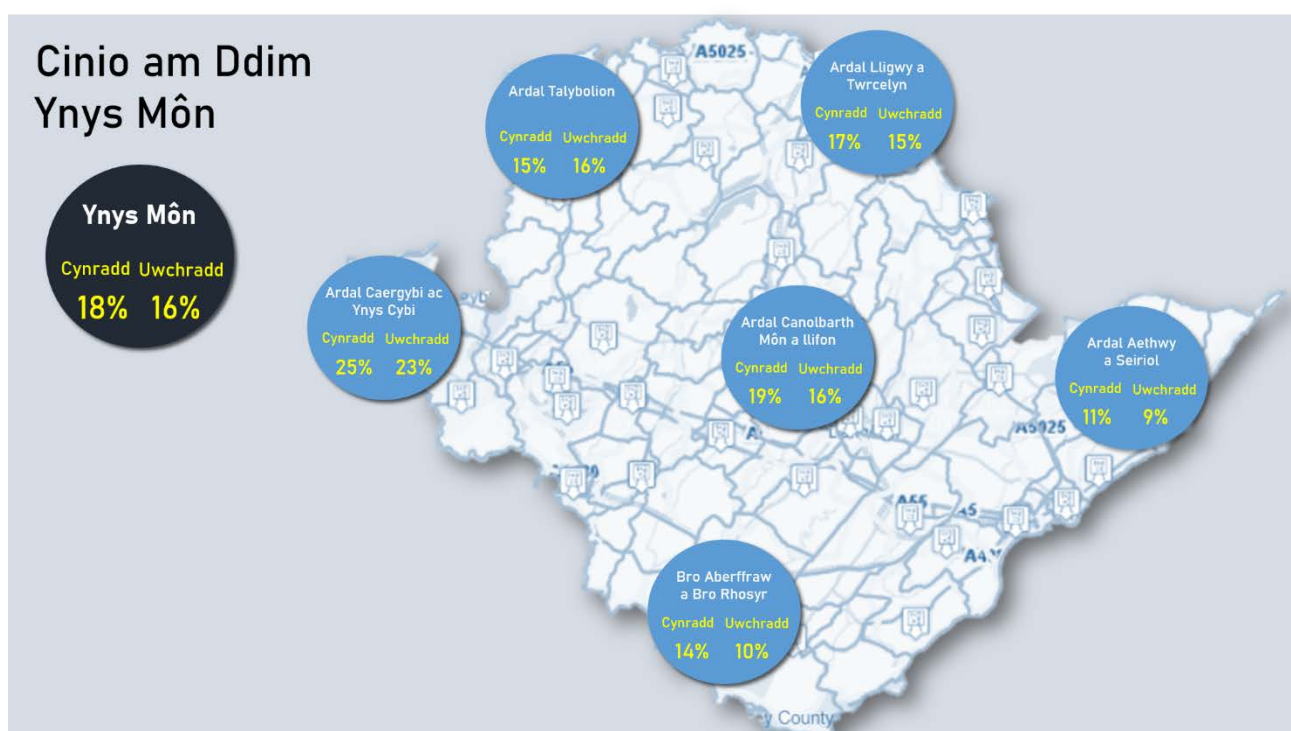


<b>Title</b>	FREE SCHOOL MEALS SCHEME REPORT
<b>Author</b>	Learning Service's Business and Performance Manager
<b>Date</b>	October 2022

The new free school meals scheme will ensure that all primary children will receive free school meals by September 2023. The table below shows the number of pupils who were already entitled to free school meals for the past 3 years:

Year	Numbers entitled to free school meals	% of Anglesey's school children entitled to free school meals	% of children in Wales entitled to free school meals
2019/20	1547	17%	17%
2020/21	1879	20%	19%
2021/22	2065	22%	23%

The map below shows the free school meals percentages for primary and secondary children by ward (Gwynedd and Anglesey Welfare Report 2021):



### 1. School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)

The School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) is a scheme that has been in place for three years and provides education on food and nutrition, physical activities, enrichment sessions and healthy meals for children in areas of social deprivation during the summer



holidays. 'Food and Fun' is the brand used on a local level to promote schemes to children and families.

The scheme supports some children likely to become vulnerable for a good portion of the summer holidays, and contributes towards improving their motivation towards learning. Children receive energetic and fun activities for at least three weeks over the summer holidays. The plan is an excellent way to help parents shoulder the additional costs of the summer holidays, which in its turn has a positive effect on the health and wellbeing of children and their parents. This coincides with the priorities of the Authority's Poverty Prevention Board.

## **2. New Free School Meals Scheme**

Following Welsh Government's announcement to offer free school meals to primary children in September 2023, starting with the Foundation Phase in September 2022 (April 2023 following a statement on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June), officers from the Learning Service have worked with the catering company Chartwells and officers from the Property Department to realise this plan in Anglesey's schools.

### **2.1 Planning Work**

The planning and engagement work began in January 2021. The engagement work has included engaging with headteachers via site visits, governors via briefing sessions and parents and children via discussions within schools, letters and social media.

An assessment was held in each school to identify what new equipment was required in each school, and whether any maintenance work was required. Modelling work was conducted on the current free school meals uptake figures, and an increase to 60%, 80% and 100%. Following this assessment, the schools were prioritised using the RAG process (Red, Amber, Green).

Eleven schools were identified as red schools requiring maintenance work in order to provide for the Foundation Phase (by April 2023). The majority of the maintenance work was carried out in the schools over the summer, and most equipment arrived at the school by September 2022.

A new staffing model was developed, and the Chartwells catering company has adapted the hours of some of the current staff and appointed 7 new members of staff.

### **2.2 Funding the Scheme**

£225m has been committed by Welsh Government to ensure that it is fulfilled over the next three years, and they have provided £25m of initial funds to support the capital requirements of councils and to plan for UPFSM in general. We have used our funds to purchase upgraded kitchen equipment and other types of work required at the schools where the kitchens need the equipment in order to be able to provide the service.

Funds to fulfil the commitment to provide free school meals to all primary school children have been allocated as follows (by financial year):

- 2022-23 £40m
- 2023-24 £70m
- 2024-25 £90m

Up to now, Anglesey has received a capital funds grant of £594,412 to support fund award in relation to the Capital Funding Grant. The funds have been calculated using methodology similar to the Education Improvement Grant (EIG), based on the number of 3 to 18 year old pupils and the number of schools in 2020. These funds are allocated according to pupil numbers (70%) and the number of schools (30%).

### 2.3 Provision September 2022

It was required for all authorities to be able to provide free school meals from September 2022 for each pupil in the Reception class. Isle of Anglesey County Council has also been able to extend this offer into Year 1, and we are monitoring the provision in order to identify when it will be possible for us to extend the offer to all pupils in Year 2.

Regular meetings continue between the Learning Service, Property and Chartwells in order to be able to monitor, identify and solve any matters in a timely manner. We are currently trialling online ordering with 3 schools in order to be able to plan meals better, and we continue to discuss the maintenance work so that we can ensure that the remainder of the equipment arrives the schools, and is installed without disrupting the provision.

We monitor the scheme numbers and report back monthly to Welsh Government. The information in the table below compares the numbers on the week of the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of September this year with the same week last year:

Year	Number of meals for Reception and Year 1 in a week	% uptake of meals
2021 (13 – 17 September)	1,490	31%
2022 (12 – 16 September)	3,515	74%

The figures show that the number of children entitled to free school meals increases every year, and the uptake of free school meals compared to the uptake when a fee was charged has increased from 31% to 71%. This shows that the free school meals scheme for all primary children is an important step towards preventing poverty and ensuring that all primary children receive at least one hot meal a day.

### 3. Next Steps

1. Target schools where the school meal uptake is low and try to increase numbers by marketing and engaging.
2. Continue to meet every week with Property and Chartwells in order to continue with the maintenance and planning work for whole school provision from September 2023.
3. Monitor the provision and decide on a date to introduce to Year 2.
4. Continue to communicate regularly with school parents and other stakeholders.
5. Collaborate with other services to ensure that children entitled to free school meals under the old procedure continue to be identified in order to receive bespoke aid and support.

<b>Title</b>	RESPONDING TO POVERTY CHALLENGES
<b>Author</b>	Llinos Williams, Rheolwr Gwasanaeth Tai Cymunedol
<b>Date</b>	October 2022

## 1. Introduction

The cost-of-living crisis is effecting everyone, individuals, families, communities, businesses and organisations on the Island. In addition to the local delivery of UK Government and Welsh government interventions, the County Council continues to deliver several support services and interventions, many in partnership with other local organisaitions.

First Minister made an Oral Statement on the cost of living in the Senedd Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (entitled Update on the Cost of Living dated 20/09/2022)

The Bevan Foundation recently reported (entitled Snapshot of Poverty dated Summer 2022) that:

- Whilst the cost-of-living crisis is affecting everyone in Wales, it is low-income households that are the hardest hit.
- Low-income households are far more likely to have to cut back on essentials or fall into debt because of rising costs than middle and high income households.
- In November 2021, **39 per cent of Welsh households** (commensurate with **12,306 on Anglesey**) reported that they struggled to afford anything beyond essential items.
- This is likely to have increased over recent months, following the increase in fuel costs and other essential commodities such as food.
- A significant proportion of the Welsh population are therefore likely to have minimal discretionary spending over the coming months.
- This will have an impact on sectors such as tourism, hospitality and entertainment, sectors that were hit especially hard by the pandemic
- Rural households are likely to be more negatively affected by rising costs than urban households. This is likely to have a significant impact upon Anglesey citizens, given its rural geographical nature.

The purpose of this report is to summarise where and how the County Council delivers services and interventions (many in partnership) to minimize the impact of poverty on the Island.

## 2. Context

The IACC anti-poverty strategy 2018 – 2022 outlines the approach to poverty. It was developed and adopted prior to the current enhanced impacts and challenges of the cost of living crisis becoming prevalent. It is recognised that the County Council's approach and priorities need to be reviewed and updated once a new Council Plan has been adopted.

The following table provides an overview on some of the identified poverty areas that Anglesey residents have faced and continue to face. The table provides information on identified risks

and how as a County Council, with integral partners' agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Ynys Môn, both food banks and other 3<sup>rd</sup> sector providers, these risks are mitigated.

Poverty area	Identified risks	Mitigation
<p><b>Unable to afford food OR unable to afford fresh food</b></p>	<p>Effect on children not having access to nutritious food &amp; longer term effects on wellbeing, obesity</p> <p>School holiday risks for children receiving free school meals</p> <p>Adults making choices over eating or heating. Longer term health issues.</p> <p>Health inequalities. Increased demand on statutory services to include homelessness, primary care, adults &amp; Childrens' services.</p> <p>Increased demand on food banks which are in the main, operated by volunteers.</p>	<p>Food banks</p> <p>Bwyd Da Môn</p> <p>Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) Emergency payment – if eligible</p> <p>IOACC discretionary funding (phase two of Welsh Government funding)</p>
<p><b>Child Poverty</b></p>	<p>Child protection challenges, lower educational outcomes and attainment with children becoming entrenched in the poverty cycle, negative health &amp; social consequences into adulthood with continuous cycles into statutory services, unhealthy lifestyles, poorer employment outcomes.</p>	<p>Teulu Môn</p> <p>Educational settings</p> <p>Free school meals and School holiday funding</p> <p>IACC Corporate Safeguarding Board</p>
<p><b>Fuel poverty</b></p>	<p>Vulnerable families &amp; people of all ages making decisions over heating or eating.</p> <p>The effects of fuel poverty on the wellbeing of household members plus increased maintenance issues such as damp challenges, which in turn, can affect the health of residents within properties. Health issues linked to respiratory, circulatory and mental health challenges.</p> <p>Increased risks of health issues will affect the volume of residents requiring statutory services, such as</p>	<p>DAF Emergency hardship funding – if eligible</p> <p>Financial Inclusion Team / CAB Ynys Môn and O'Toole Team support</p> <p>Food bank fuel vouchers – this is a limited resource and can only be accessed if requiring a food parcel</p> <p>Community-led warm spaces</p> <p>IACC discretionary funding (phase two of Welsh Government funding)</p>

	<p>adults and / or Childrens, Community Mental Health Team.</p> <p>Fuel arrears can impact household finances, which could lead to homelessness / longer term debt if it becomes unmanageable.</p>	<p>National Government funding. For example, residents that are claiming certain benefits are given top up funds within their entitlements</p> <p>Winter fuel support for eligible households</p>
<b>Not in Education or Training - NEET</b>	<p>Increased risks with criminality, poor life choices, wellbeing challenges, lack of drive, homelessness, lower productivity, generational welfare cases, and longer term statutory intervention.</p>	<p>Education</p> <p>Youth services</p> <p>Môn CF</p> <p>Menter Môn</p>
<b>Debt</b>	<p>Court action, homelessness, unmanageable debt challenges, stress and wellbeing related health issues such as depression &amp; anxiety</p>	<p>CAB Ynys Môn are the only debt advice provision on Anglesey. Whilst Housing services are looking to develop a debt service, in partnership with CAB, this will not be live for at least 12 months due to staff requiring to complete debt qualifications.</p>
<b>Period &amp; hygiene</b>	<p>Bullying, harassment, embarrassment, mental health and esteem issues through being unable to maintain personal hygiene and cleanliness</p>	<p>All education settings have access to period hygiene products.</p> <p>Food banks offer hygiene products as part of their parcels.</p> <p>All surgeries and leisure centres across Ynys Môn have access to period hygiene products</p>

A word of caution is that all agencies involved in dealing with the cost of living crisis have not previously had to deal with the current and future forecasted demand on their services meaning contingency planning, continuous risk assessing and acting upon any request of support that is required through this period of emergency. This is demonstrated by the data breakdown below.

CAB Ynys Môn Demand overview (Jan to Sept 2021 & Jan to Sept 2022)

## Ward Count of clients with a financial crisis issue

Local Authority Ward	Current Period	Previous Period	Change	% Change
Aethwy	12	8	4	50%
Bodowyr	10	5	5	100%
Bro Aberffraw	20	10	10	100%
Bro'r Llynnoedd	19	13	6	46%
Canolbarth Môn	32	20	12	60%
Cefni	15	4	11	275%
Crigyll	9	7	2	29%
Lligwy	18	15	3	20%
Parc a'r Mynydd	20	14	6	43%
Seiriol	19	21	-2	-10%
Talybolion	16	8	8	100%
Tref Cybi	50	32	18	56%
Twrcelyn	37	21	16	76%
Ynys Gybi	39	23	16	70%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>61%</b>

### 3. Housing Services Overview

- Housing Services commission CAB Ynys Môn to undertake welfare rights and financial inclusion support to Anglesey residents at an annual cost of £80,000. This level of funding has not changed for over 5 Years.
- CAB Ynys Môn proactively seek additional funding in order to maintain their service delivery levels and increase capacity during times of crisis.
- Housing Services have an internal welfare rights team, the O'Toole Centre (OTC) and an internal Financial Inclusion Team (FIT).
- All of the above teams provide tenure neutral support covering all Anglesey residents.
- Over the last 9 months, demands on the OTC, FIT and CAB Ynys Môn has significantly increased.
- All of the above teams are involved in the Welsh Government discretionary hardship scheme phase two. Information on this scheme for Anglesey residents can be found in annexe one.
- OTC, FIT and CAB Ynys Môn have a 3-4 week waiting list for support.

### 4. Food Poverty on Anglesey

#### 4.1 Food banks

- Both food banks report an increase in demand.
- Total number of parcels delivered to residents from Amlwch food bank since January 2022 is **523**. During the same period in 2021, the total number of parcels delivered to residents from Amlwch food bank was **416** parcels. Year on Year growth in demand is **+ 107** parcels.
- We do not have comparator data for Anglesey Food Bank.
- A conference call with both food banks and IACC officers occurs monthly which provides ongoing support, covering aspects such as demand, supplies, challenges and successes.

- e) Both food banks report a reduction in food donations and an increase in expenditure on the purchase of supplies to maintain demand. Both food banks report an increase in expenditure to cover petrol costs.
- f) The WLGA 2022-23 food poverty funding of £22,400 for Anglesey was provided to both of our banks to cover costs, including fuel and food purchases.

#### **4.2 Bwyd Da Môn**

- a) The Bwyd Da Môn (BDM) project provides an opportunity for subsidised food membership for households in financial crisis, covering a period of up to 12 weeks.
- b) Funding for this subsidy was provided by a successful food poverty and insecurity application by IACC to Welsh Government, resulting in £15,000 funding to cover the project for 12 months.
- c) The BDM subsidy scheme provides £25 worth of food for up to 12-weeks, food that would have otherwise gone to landfill.
- d) From week 13 onwards, the aim is to encourage subsidised members to become paying members. A paying member is £5 per week with up to £25 worth of food in return.
- e) Over the last 12 months, the subsidy scheme has supported in the region of **80** households. The take up once the subsidy period ends is very low.

#### **4.3 Welfare and Financial Inclusion**

- a) As mentioned above, the O'Toole Centre (OTC) Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) and CAB Ynys Môn respond to welfare rights and financial inclusion needs for Anglesey residents.
- b) This support ensures Anglesey residents are achieving any benefit entitlements, can access funding such as the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) alongside referrals for immediate intervention such as a food bank parcel.
- c) Latest data from Office of National Statistics (ONS) report that 9 in 10 adults are affected by the increase in the cost of living which raises the concerns as to do we have enough resources (The Rising Cost of Living and its Impact on Individuals in Great Britain, November 2021).
- d) Year on Year, the Total number of referrals has increased 3.5% (comparing this financial Year to date to last financial Year to date)
- e) Total referrals received last year during Q1 & Q2 was 391 compared to 405 as at 06/10/2022. Whilst the number of referrals has only increased by 3.5%, the amount of intervention per referral has substantially increased.
- f) This Year, the financial inclusion team have been involved in additional cost of living events and projects, including Bwyd Da Môn subsidy referrals; Anglesey Virtual Hub Session; Rural Roadshows; and the 2022 Winter fuel payment support.



#### 4.4 Fuel Poverty

- a) According to the National Energy Action (NEA) the national fuel poverty charity, working to ensure that everyone in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is warm and safe at home.
- b) Up to 45% (614,000) of all households in Wales could be in fuel poverty following the price cap increase of April 2022. Based upon the most recent estimated total registered on **Anglesey, (31,555) (published 23.9.2021)**, this would be commensurate with **14,200** households on the Island.
- c) Up to 8% (115,000) of all households in Wales could be in severe fuel poverty (needing to spend more than 20% of their income just to keep warm) – commensurate with **2,524 Anglesey households in severe poverty**.
- d) DAF funding can provide almost immediate financial support for eligible households to cover the costs of fuel. This would be an application by our FIT or CAB Ynys Môn.
- e) Residents that are not entitled to benefit / welfare support would not be entitled to this support. IACC have aimed to address this through the phase 2 discretionary hardship funding to ensure residents that are in-work poverty are provided with support.

#### 5. Homelessness

- a) 2021-22 – IACC had 842 homeless presentations (*average of 70 presentations per month*)
- b) 2022 to date – IACC has had 383 homeless presentations thus far (*average of 77 presentations per month*)
- c) 74 of Section 21 notices given from the private sector. Some evidence suggests this is due to the Renting Homes Wales Act 2022 and the higher value of properties on the Island. Additionally, some Anglesey private landlords are opting to sell their properties due to higher prices. If current levels continue as they are, we will see a projected increase of 31% in homeless presentations due to Anglesey residents having to leave private rented accommodation.
- d) There is a substantial lack of affordable private rented accommodation provision across Anglesey.

#### 6. Conclusion

It is apparent that a large number of people and households are experiencing considerable financial difficulties as a result of the cost of living crisis. Considerable collaborative work is being undertaken to support where possible, but keeping up with demand is challenging.

The anticipated further increases in fuel costs from October 2022, is likely to create substantial hardship. This is likely to result in:

- Increased poverty levels amongst Anglesey Households
- Increased child poverty
- Increased incidents of domestic abuse, which is already at levels previously unseen
- Increased homelessness
- Increased number of people presenting with mental health needs



- Increased number of children placed at risk and on the child protection register
- Increased demand for Housing Support Services which is already exceeding current supply
- Increased substance misuse
- Increased crime and disorder.
- Unsustainable demand and pressures for early intervention and prevention on the voluntary sector organizations, resulting in
- Increase demand for statutory intervention
- Increased unmet need and hard to reach individuals and families.